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ABSTRACT

Part of the Alberta (Canada) Education's "Program of Studies for Elementary Schools, 1978" (amended 1981), this publication presents the curriculum specifications for the grade six language arts achievement test. These curriculum specifications integrate a taxonomy of levels of thinking skills with a set of five communications skills--writing, reading, viewing, listening, and speaking. The guide organizes the thinking skills under these major headings and subheadings: (1) literal understanding (recognizing and recalling); (2) inferential understanding (inferring, interpreting, predicting, and concluding); (3) application (locating and organizing, classifying, and synthesizing); (4) evaluation (distinguishing, judging appropriateness, and judging worth, desirability, and acceptability); and (5) appreciation (responding). After outlining the percentage of classroom time suggested for each of the communications skills, the document recommends time limits for each level of the thinking skills. The main section of the document presents detailed curriculum specifications suggesting the appropriate communication skill to be used in conjunction with each thinking skill, and the relative percentage of classroom time to be spent on each concept. For example, under the thinking skill heading "Literal Understanding," the ability to recognize and recall main ideas is given 15 to 20% listening time, 10 to 15% viewing time, and 25% reading time, with no speaking or writing time. The relative importance of each thinking skill is weighted according to the recommendations of classroom teachers. (JG)

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GRADE 6
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
CURRICULUM SPECIFICATIONS

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GRADE 6 LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM SPECIFICATIONS

The Language Arts Curriculum Specifications for Achievement Tests in Grade 6 were prepared in July, 1981, by a committee of classroom teachers, Language Arts consultants, and Alberta Education personnel under the direction of the Curriculum Branch. These specifications were revised and validated in January, 1982. Alberta Education acknowledges with appreciation the contributions of the members of the Grade 6 Language Arts Committee.

K. Nixon, Alberta Education, CHAIRMAN
M. Thornton, Alberta Education
B. Honert, Alberta Education
V. Hnatiuk, Rocky Mountain House School Division
P. Schuster, Thibault Roman Catholic Public School District
N. Scott, Fort McMurray School District

Two major criteria for the Grade 3 Language Arts Achievement Tests were used as the criteria underlying the *curriculum specifications* for the Grade 6 Language Arts Achievement tests. They are:

1. to be based wholly on the *Program of Studies for Elementary Schools, 1978* (amended 1981).

2. to reflect the wholeness of the Language Arts program through integrating a taxonomy of levels of *thinking* with the various *communication skills*. These include the receptive components of listening, viewing, reading, and the expressive components of speaking and writing.

WEIGHTING FACTORS

Varied emphases are reflected in the system of weighting *frequency* (time spent) and *importance*.

1. Time Factor

   The Curriculum Specifications Committee recommended frequency ratings from 5 (high frequency) to 1 (low frequency) comparable to the amount of time spent in class mastering the various *concepts* (e.g. Supporting Details) and percentage weightings on the Language Arts *skills* (e.g. Listening). When and where percentage weightings are given, a range from 5 to 10 per cent is suggested. The only exception is Reading, for which 25 per cent of time is recommended. For example, it is advised that 25 - 35 per cent of class time be spent on *writing concepts* while a moderate amount of class time be spent on *main idea* because it is categorized as a 3.

2. Importance Factor

The *importance* factor, separate from the *time* factor, is represented by the letters A, B, C, D as follows:

A - Extremely important
B - Very important
C - Important
D - Somewhat important

The objective *main idea* weighted 3B, therefore, means an average amount of time is spent on it (3) and it is very important (B). [See Table 3]

For further clarification of *curriculum specification* concepts, readers should refer to the concept and skill statements in the *Program of Studies for Elementary Schools*, 1978 (revised 1981).

Table 1 outlines the percentage range of classroom time suggested for each of the communications skills. Table 2 outlines the time suggested for each of the taxonomic levels. Table 3 presents detailed *curriculum specifications*.

Table 1

Grade 6 Language Arts Total Curriculum

MODALITIES	PERCENTAGE RANGE
WRITING	25 - 35
READING	25
VIEWING	10 - 15
LISTENING	15 - 20
SPEAKING	15 - 25
TOTAL	100

Table 2

Grade 6 Language Arts

TAXONOMIC LEVELS	TIME WEIGHTING IN PER CENT
I. LITERAL UNDERSTANDING	10 - 20
A. Recognizing and Recalling	
II. INFERENTIAL UNDERSTANDING	20 - 30
A. Inferring B. Interpreting C. Predicting D. Concluding	
III. APPLICATION	25 - 35
A. Locating and Organizing B. Classifying C. Synthesizing	
IV. EVALUATION	10 - 20
A. Distinguishing B. Judging Appropriateness C. Judging Worth, Desirability, and Acceptability	
V. APPRECIATION	10 - 20
A. Responding	
TOTAL	100

Table 3

Grade 6 Language Arts Curriculum Specifications

TIME WEIGHTING IN PER CENT*		IMPORTANCE** FREQUENCY***	LISTENING 15 - 20%	VIEWING 10 - 15%	READING 25%	SPEAKING 15 - 25%	WRITING 25 - 35%
10-20%	I. LITERAL UNDERSTANDING						
	A. Recognizing and Recalling						
	1. main idea	3B	X	X	X		
	2. supporting details	3B	X	X	X		
	3. vocabulary (contextual [semantic, syntactic], phonetic, and structural)	3B	X	X	X		
	4. sequence	2B	X	X	X		
	5. direction (procedures)	3B	X	X	X		
	6. comparison and contrast	2C	X	X	X		
	7. classification	2C	X	X	X		
	8. character traits	3C	X	X	X		
	9. relationships (e.g. cause and effect)	4B	X	X	X		
	10. conventions of the language (e.g. mechanics, levels of usage)	4D	X	X	X		
	11. feelings and emotions	2C	X	X	X		
	12. structure of language (e.g. syntax)	4D	X	X	X		
	13. forms of literature (e.g. fairy tale, limerick)	5C	X	X	X		
	14. elements of the writer's craft (e.g. author's purpose, point of view, rhythm, sensory image)	4C	X	X	X		

* Weighting code (based on what the teachers recommended):
Percentages represent *time spent*

**

A	B	C	D
Extremely Important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important

***

5	4	3	2	1
High Frequency				Low Frequency

TIME WEIGHTING IN PER CENT*		IMPORTANCE** FREQUENCY***	LISTENING 15 - 20%	VIEWING 10 - 15%	READING 25%	SPEAKING 15 - 25%	WRITING 25 - 35%
20-30%	II. INFERENTIAL UNDERSTANDING						
	A. Inferring						
	1. main idea	3B	X	X	X		
	2. details	3C	X	X	X		
	3. vocabulary (contextual [semantic, syntactic], phonetic, and structural)	4A	X	X	X		
	4. sequence	3B	X	X	X		
	5. comparison and contrast	3B	X	X	X		
	6. classification	3C	X	X	X		
	7. character traits	3B	X	X	X		
	8. relationships (e.g. time and distance, cause and effect)	4B	X	X	X		
	9. structure of language	5B	X	X	X	X	X
	10. elements of writer's craft (e.g. author's purpose, point of view, mood, theme)	4B	X	X	X		
	B. Interpreting						
	1. body language (e.g. facial expression, voice quality)	1B	X	X			
	2. figurative language (e.g. simile, metaphor)	2B	X	X	X		
	3. feelings and emotions	3B	X	X	X		
	4. role of reader/writer, viewer/illustrator, speaker/listener	2B	X	X	X	X	X
	C. Predicting						
	1. predicting outcomes	4A	X	X	X		
	D. Concluding						
	1. drawing conclusions	4A	X	X	X		
	2. making generalizations	4A	X	X	X		

TIME WEIGHTING IN PER CENT*		IMPORTANCE** FREQUENCY***	LISTENING 15 - 20%	VIEWING 10 - 15%	READING 25%	SPEAKING 15 - 25%	WRITING 25 - 35%
25-35%	III. APPLICATION						
	A. Locating and Organizing and Using						
	1. information from a wide variety of sources (e.g. bibliography, dictionary, thesaurus, resource person)	5A	X	X	X	X	X
	B. Classifying						
	1. wide variety of forms of expression (e.g. myth, poem, report, conversation)	3B	X	X	X	X	X
	C. Synthesizing						
	1. formation of sensory images	3B	X	X	X	X	X
	2. use of increasingly complex forms or structures of language (e.g. precise words, modifiers, kinds of sentences)	4A	X	X	X	X	X
	3. use of language arts skills in increasingly widening contexts						
	a) in a variety of forms (e.g. report, biography)	4A	X	X	X	X	X
	b) for a variety of audiences (e.g. peer group, newspaper readers)	2A	X	X	X	X	X
	c) for a variety of purposes (e.g. to entertain, to persuade)	4A	X	X	X	X	X
	d) in a variety of situations (e.g. class assembly, personal use)	4A	X	X	X	X	X
10-20%	IV. EVALUATION						
	A. Distinguishing						
	1. reality/fantasy	2B	X	X	X	X	X
	2. fact/opinion	3B	X	X	X	X	X
	3. plausibility/exaggeration	3B	X	X	X	X	X

TIME WEIGHTING IN PER CENT*		IMPORTANCE** FREQUENCY***	LISTENING 15 - 20%	VIEWING 10 - 15%	READING 25%	SPEAKING 15 - 25%	WRITING 25 - 35%
	B. Judging Appropriateness						
	1. structure of language (e.g. syntax)	4B	X	X	X	X	X
	2. conventions of language (e.g. proofreading, formal/informal language, punctuation, volume, pitch)	4B	X	X	X	X	X
	3. level of attention according to purpose	1B	X	X	X	X	X
	4. adjustment of rate to suit purpose	1B			X	X	X
	C. Judging Worth, Desirability, and Acceptability						
	1. ideas (e.g. absurdity, feelings, humor)	2B	X	X	X	X	X
	2. importance of acceptable social behavior	3B	X	X	X	X	X
10-20%	V. APPRECIATION						
	A. Responding						
	1. emotional response to content	4B	X	X	X	X	X
	2. author's use of language						
	a) different types and forms of literature	1B	X	X	X	X	X
	b) elements of the writer's craft	2B	X	X	X	X	X
	c) delights and pleasures of language	1A	X	X	X	X	X
	c) visual and auditory imagery - rhythm in language	3A	X	X	X	X	X